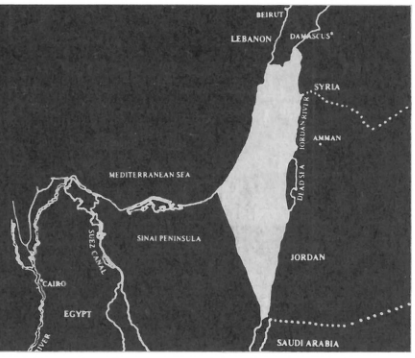
Palestine!



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CONFLICTS ON STRATEGY AND UNITY

PLO Seeks Path Though Hard Times

On August 12 a terrible explosion leveled a building in the Fakhrani neighborhood of Beirut; at least 160 people were killed, the headquarters of a small commando group, the Palestine Liberation Front, was demolished and 30 of its cadres killed, and offices of other resistance organizations were destroyed and their members killed as well.

It is not known for certain now just who was responsible for the grisly act; the PLO Executive Committee quickly denied speculation that the blast was the result of the strife between factions of the PLO. *Falastin ath Thawra,* the PLO's daily newspaper, while attributing the carnage to U.S. and Israeli intelligence agencies, commented that the operation aimed at "spreading confusion in the ranks of the Palestinian revolution and at exploiting the negative atmosphere which has enveloped it of late."

The conflict within the PLO had grown so heated by August, and so many lives had been lost in attempts to resolve by arms the political differences that a perfect cover had been created for any of the external enemies of the PLO—and there are many—to blow up the apartment building and wait for a cloud of suspicion to descend upon a Palestinian group. In the aftermath of the explosion the PLO Executive Committee took special measures to minimize the danger of renewed internal violence; the basic political questions which divide the PLO remain to be resolved however, possibly at the next session of the Palestine National Council, to be held perhaps as early as this fall.

THE ROOTS OF THE POLITICAL CRISIS

The disputes now raging within the Palestinian resistance movement focus on the problem of how the movement should conduct its struggle during a period in which the balance of forces in the region is quite unfavorable. The statelessness of the

(continued on page 12)

LEBANESE PROGRESSIVE EXPLAINS HOW...

National Movement Views Lebanon

Following is an interview with Dr. Inam Raad, member of the executive committee of the Lebanese National Movement. The interview was conducted by Palestine! *during Raad's recent visit to the U.S. as representative of the LNM.*

The Lebanese National Movement is the front of progressive forces in Lebanon. Forged by thirteen parties in 1973, the LNM united and led the Lebanese opposition to the right-wing during the country's civil war.

Dr. Raad is a member of the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party; other members of the LNM executive committee represent the Progressive Socialist Party, the Lebanese Communist Party, the Organization for Communist Action in Lebanon and the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party (affiliated to the Iraqi Ba'ath).

In this interview Raad sets forth the perspective of these forces on the current situation in Lebanon, in the wake of the civil war and the massive Israeli invasion this March.

Palestine! What is the situation in southern Lebanon since June 13, the date on which the Israeli troops were supposed to withdraw?

Raad: This withdrawal was only apparent and not real. Instead of the U.N. troops replacing the Israeli troops, the Israeli troops handed over the portion of land that Israel had occupied near the frontier to the gang of Sa'ad Haddad [the commander of the right-wing militia in southern Lebanon]. He is an Israeli stooge, a quisling, and the troops he commands are in full cooperation with the Zionists. Therefore we feel that Israeli occupation of that portion is still prevailing, but in a disguised form.

(continued on page 11)

Palestine!/photo

Lebanese National Movement militia on drill near Beirut.

BIR ZEIT DEAN INTERVIEWED

Palestinian University Confronts Occupation

Bir Zeit University, the only Arab university on Palestinian territory, is engaged in a running battle with the Israeli Military Governor of the West Bank: the occupation authorities, fearing agitation and resistance from the students and faculty, resort to censorship, beatings, imprisonment and deportations. Yet the University refuses to surrender, and, within the limited academic freedom which remains to it, perseveres with programs to educate its students, research local problems and serve its community.

This spring the University won a limited victory in a skirmish with the Israelis over work permits for its staff with foreign passports. The Military Governor had announced that seven faculty members with U.S., Canadian and British passports would be denied the permits the authorities require of them in order to continue teaching at Bir Zeit. Then, after international protest, the Israeli government backed down somewhat and granted a year's reprieve.

In the following interview Dr. Mohammed Hallaj, Dean of Bir Zeit's Faculty of Arts, describes the university's special role as a Palestinian national institution and the unusual difficulties of providing college education under military occupation.

Palestine! What kind of difficulties do you experience in operating a University under foreign military occupation?

Hallaj. We face many problems as a result of the occupation. Financially, we have lost our tax-exempt status and Israeli taxes now take a good percentage of our budget. As to scholarship, we face many limitations on academic freedom. Censorship for example: whether a faculty member is doing a paper or a book, or whether it is a student paper, everything that we produce for publication is censored. Also books we import are censored, and it is extremely difficult to get books and journals from outside, especially works in Arabic. Faculty recruitment has become difficult. Many Palestinians who would be interested in coming to the West Bank to teach at Bir Zeit may not be given the necessary work and residence permits.

The occupation also affects class room work; students sometimes get into trouble for doing certain types of research. We were teaching a course last year on the economy of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the instructor had difficulty teaching it properly because there is not much data on the subject. So he and his students designed little research projects aimed at collecting economic data. One project was an industrial survey, and they prepared a questionnaire which groups of students took to various establishments in the occupied areas. One student was put into prison for four months for doing this, and when he was released the Israeli authorities told him not to do this sort of thing again.

STUDENTS TARGET OF REPRESSION

Palestine! How does Israeli military occupation affect student life at Bir Zeit University?

Hallaj. The most tragic sort of influence is that we constantly have students in prison, sometimes for a brief period of detention without trial, other times they are sentenced. Our students are subjected to arrest very often simply for being students. The Israeli military authorities instinctively think students are responsible for agitation, responsible for unrest. They practice collective punishment against the students.

The second day after the invasion of Lebanon [March 17, 1978], there were demonstrations in Bir Zeit, like in every other place in the West Bank. The Israelis didn't send troops to Bir Zeit, but rather put a checkpoint on the road leading to Ramallah. Twenty-three students going home from the University in a bus were stopped at the checkpoint, and were taken to prison. Maybe they participated in demonstrations, maybe not. But the Israeli idea is that university students are troublesome, that they are good candidates for prison and detention.

Palestine! Has the Israeli Army ever intervened inside the University campus itself?

Hallaj. Yes. A most flagrant case was [on March 10, 1976] preceding the municipal elections on the West Bank and the Land Day in the Galilee; it was a period of general unrest. A large Israeli military force came into Bir Zeit village, where there was a demonstration. The Israelis left alone the students demonstrating in the streets—maybe because they had rocks with them—and attacked the students in the dormitory who were not demonstrating. The soldiers broke the doors of the dormitory and of the student rooms with the butts of their rifles and their boots; they turned beds over, destroyed furniture; they beat up many students. The soldiers also went around the campus shooting, mostly in the air. We had to send 18 students to the hospital.

In the schools located in the cities such things happen more often. Hashemiyyah High School in al Bireh is probably the best example. The school is located in a bad place—in the middle of the town; the authorities apparently feel that a school can contaminate a town by being in the midst of it. One of the things I think helps us at Bir Zeit sometimes is the fact that we are located in a very small village.

ARBITRARY PUNISHMENT FAILS

The Israelis, however, are very unpredictable with their repression. This uncertainty of life is one of the difficulties we face under occupation. You don't have known rights and known obligations. It's government by personal whim. There are no rules that I can find out, that tell me I can go this far and no further. Even if you had the intention of abiding by the limits, you don't know what the limits are. It leads to a feeling of total insecurity. One day you can talk and get away with it, you can demonstrate and get away with it. The next day, you can sneeze and get into trouble.

Palestine! Has this type of repression stopped political life on the campus?

Hallaj. On the contrary. One thing that hurts the Israelis in terms of their ability to condition our behavior, to control us, is the fact that one can get hurt for nothing. For example, Taisir al Aruri [a professor at Bir Zeit] spent 45 months in prison, and we have never been able to find out why. He had not done anything. I am sure that if he had done anything they would have put him on trial. The closest thing we were able to get towards an explanation from the authorities of why Taisir spent so many months in prison was that he was thinking of doing something.

If you can spend 45 months of your life in prison for this sort of crime—because somebody thinks that you are thinking of doing something—you lose fear. If I can be in prison for nothing, I might as well do something and make it worth the stay. Our students and people in general tend to have this attitude.

Some months ago [January 5, 1978] two of our students were beaten to within an inch of their lives and as far as we know they had not done anything at all to justify this. They are among the least active students on campus. They were summoned to the military government headquarters and told to sign a statement to the effect that they had thrown rocks at the Army and that they wouldn't do it again. The students refused to sign. They said, "We didn't throw rocks at the Army, we can't sign a statement like this." They were beaten up so severely that they had to be

hospitalized.

Students see that a person can be beaten up, can be expelled, can be imprisoned for doing nothing, and that the same thing happens if they do something, so prison and beatings become less of a deterrent. There are other reasons, but this is one reason why the students are not restrained. Every time something happens they call a meeting in the assembly and they sit there and discuss and make speeches and slogans and issue statements and even invite the press.

The students have not been inhibited, because they feel that we have reached rock bottom. This feeling of desperation sometimes makes people brave. We have a saying in Arabic that is not easy to translate, something like, "He who is impaled will curse the Sultan."

GRADUATES FACE PRESSURE TO EMIGRATE

Palestine! What difficulties has the occupation caused Bir Zeit students in finding appropriate jobs upon graduation?

Hallaj. This is a problem. Because there is no economic development going on in the West Bank, and no creation of jobs, college graduates find it very difficult to get jobs here. Teaching is almost the only outlet for them: most of our graduates work in the school system. Although 50 to 60,000 West Bankers go into Israel to work, college graduates from the West Bank can't work in Israel even if they want to; Israelis are not interested in hiring skilled laborers and educated people from the West Bank. They employ West Bankers only as unskilled manual labor, mostly in construction or on farms.

We face a serious problem. Are we educating people who will find it increasingly necessary to leave the West Bank to find work? We are trying to minimize this possibility by developing the programs of the University to suit the local needs of our community. This is difficult, because we have no decision-making power beyond the University.

Palestine! In your planning now, what economic fields do you envision will be available for employment for college graduates, besides teaching?

Hallaj. Some of the professions. We have done the feasibility study for a school of engineering, to aid what small industry does exist in the West Bank. The area needs people who would supervise workers in a plant, or on a construction site, surveyors, various types of engineers. There is also a plan to start a program of medical technologies, in nursing, pharmacy and lab technology. West Bank hospitals are very much in need of lab technicians, for example.

But it will not be easy to keep the University functioning within this framework. If the occupation lasts for a very long time, then eventually, no matter how careful we are, we are going to find many students leaving, simply because, as a result of the economic stagnation in the West Bank, they can't find jobs.

Palestine! Is there already a serious brain drain from the West Bank?

Hallaj. Yes. Last year statistics showed that 19,000 people left the West Bank, and quite a few of them are graduates of vocational schools, people who learned to be electricians and carpenters. Most of these people can't find jobs on the West Bank, and the Israelis are not interested in hiring them.

This is a serious problem because it's not just a matter of the numbers—19,000 people yes, but look at who they are. You find that they are the sort of people who really build up a community anywhere in the world. This is part of our overall tragedy.

Palestine! Do you see a coherent political purpose in Israel's inhibiting economic development in the West Bank?

Hallaj. Yes, definitely. Their short-range aim is to exploit us, and they are exploiting us, the thousands of Arabs working for lower wages and no fringe benefits. But their long-range plan is for these people to go somewhere else and make room for Israeli settlers.

We live toward the end of the 20th century. And that probably means that the more crude methods of expulsion are less practical; one finds more sophisticated techniques to accomplish this end. To world public opinion, the Israelis can say that when an Arab leaves the West Bank to go work in Kuwait and drags his family with him, "Well, he's interested in money, nobody made him leave." But in fact he is made to leave. I know a lot of people who leave, not because there is a differential of pay between what he can get in the West Bank and what he can get in Kuwait. He leaves because it's the difference between starving to death and living. He can't in reality be considered to have freely emigrated; he was driven out.

A NATIONALIST INSTITUTION

Palestine! Besides trying to slow down emigration, how else does Bir Zeit see itself serving community needs?

Hallaj. Bir Zeit University is really more than just an academic institution. It serves some of the functions that are usually the responsibility of governments in other countries. For example, since we in the West Bank and Gaza are not allowed to govern ourselves, we have no agencies to collect data about ourselves. So last year Bir Zeit established a documentation research office which is designed primarily to collect data about our society, our people, population trends, economic data, labor conditions, resources. Also we have done research on illiteracy in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and we have opened literacy centers and trained teachers to work in these programs. Such functions are carried out by public agencies in other countries. But since we do not have a government, we find the University doing them.

*Palestine!*photo

Bir Zeit campus. Slogans read: "By education and continuous struggle we will liberate"; "The awareness of the people is the way to liberation."

Also Bir Zeit helps to unify our community. We Palestinians face a problem of fragmentation. Sometimes you would think that we are 10 different nations instead of one: the Palestinians living within the 1948 Israeli borders, those conquered in 1967, the refugees in the various countries. Bir Zeit draws students from all these sectors of the Palestinian people; we have students from the Galilee, from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, from the refugee communities outside. It is one of the only places where you find representatives of all these groups in one place working together, interacting with each other.

Palestine! Could you explain the University's community work program?

Hallaj. The community work program is one of the most interesting things about Bir Zeit life. All students are required to do 120 hours of labor in the community before they can graduate. The students operate the program. It's usually manual work in service of villages or refugee camps or towns in the West Bank.

(continued on page 15)

U.S. in Middle East—the Basics

Imperialist Interests

PROFITS. The oil resources of the Middle East have been a rich source of profits for the U.S. multi-national energy corporations and a key element in the expansion and consolidation of the economic power of U.S. imperialism which occurred after World War II. Between 1948 and 1970 the profits which U.S. oil companies reaped in the Middle East and repatriated to the U.S. averaged in the range of a billion dollars a year.

These profits were a major component in the wealth the U.S. was acquiring from investments abroad. Figures of the U.S. Commerce Department for 1966, for example, show that U.S. oil investments in Asia and North Africa (predominantly the Middle East and Libya) brought in 35 percent of the total profits gained on direct U.S. investment in foreign countries.

Because the Arab oil embargo imposed at the time of the October 1973 war followed by major price hikes, oil company profits went up, not down. For example, an analysis of the larger oil companies' profits indicates that the first quarter profits in 1974 (right after the price increase) jumped 78 percent over those for the same period the year before.

Even with the growing tendency of the Middle Eastern states to nationalize production of oil, the U.S.-based multinational energy corporations still have great opportunities for profit in that region: often the "nationalized" production, perhaps actually extracted by the U.S. company, will be sold under special arrangement to that same company, which has further opportunities for profit in the "downstream" operations of refining and distribution.

These profits are flowing into the very center of U.S. capital: of the top ten in the *Fortune's 500* ranking of the largest U.S. industrial corporations for 1977, five are oil companies with substantial holdings in the Middle East. The families intimately associated with these energy giants—the Rockefellers with Exxon, the Mellons with Gulf—exercise vast power in U.S. economic and political life.

CONTROL OF AN ESSENTIAL COMMODITY. The control which U.S. corporations gained over Middle Eastern oil after World War II gave U.S. capitalism a large degree of control over the flow of world oil, a commodity of fundamental importance. Whereas in 1946 British and Dutch firms controlled the lion's share of Middle Eastern oil production, 66 percent, and U.S. corporations controlled only 31 percent; by 1953, the positions had been almost precisely reversed, with the British-Dutch share falling to 31 percent and the U.S. share rising to 60 percent. At the same time, the production from Middle Eastern oilfields was increasing astronomically: not only was the pie being divided differently, but the pie itself was growing much larger.

The U.S. government played a crucial role in acquiring U.S. corporate control over the oil wealth of the Middle East—from its finagling with Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia during the war to win the Saudi oil concession for U.S. companies, to CIA assistance for a coup against a nationalist government in Iran, to subsequent pressure for award of a large share of Iranian oil, previously controlled by British interests, to U.S. companies.

The U.S. government was also very active in arranging markets for U.S. corporate-controlled oil in the Middle East. After World War II, the U.S. domestic market itself had no need for imported Middle Eastern oil, but through the Marshall Plan the U.S. government pressed Western Europe to convert from a coal-fueled economy to an oil-fueled one, and then pressured it to purchase U.S. controlled production from the Middle East. The U.S. occupation government of Japan supervised a similar process there.

By the mid-seventies the U.S. itself began to import Middle Eastern oil: whereas the U.S. was once self-sufficient in oil, by 1977 it was importing almost half its domestic consumption, 22 percent of domestic requirements coming from the Middle East.

Control of Middle Eastern oil and the continuing influence of the corporations on pricing is an enormous advantage in the corporations' plans to open up new sources of energy. With the price of Middle Eastern oil kept high enough, many forms of domestic energy production—coal, offshore oil, nuclear power—become very attractive to the energy companies, which control these sources of power in the U.S. as well as oil in the Middle East.

ACCESS TO MARKETS. The markets of the Middle East are becoming increasingly important to U.S. business. U.S. exports to the Middle East (Near East Asia, plus Egypt and Libya) have climbed from a 3.5 percent share of total global exports in 1960 to 10 percent in 1977. Sales to the oil-producing countries especially are expanding at a break-neck pace, as these countries are building entire infrastructures with their growing riches, and the upper classes are satisfying their yearnings for consumer goods.

An especially important type of export is military weapons: to the advantage of U.S. arms producers, as the war in Indochina wound down, the demand for U.S.-made weapons on the part of Middle Eastern governments increased—particularly in Israel, Iran and Saudi Arabia. In recent years 50 to 60 percent of all arms exported under the Foreign Military Sales program went to the Middle East. The exports to the Middle East comprise about 20 percent of the entire sales, foreign and domestic, of U.S. weapons manufacturers.

Exports to the Middle East help to "recycle petrodollars" —that is, to put the dollars paid out to Middle Eastern states for imports of oil back into American hands. Other forms of "recycling" include depositing these dollars in U.S. banks and investing in enterprises in this country: both of these measures, while good for the U.S. balance of payments, obviously are of no benefit at all to the general population or economic development of the exporting state. The U.S. Department of Commerce recently reported that nearly all the money paid to the oil exporters had found its way back into U.S. banks or invested in the U.S.

MILITARY-STRATEGIC INTERESTS. The U.S. government has made it clear that it is prepared to intervene militarily if necessary to insure that oil continues to flow from the Middle East to the West. According to reports, in August 1977 President Carter signed a secret directive ordering the maintenance of several "light divisions" prepared for quick intervention in the Middle East. Secretary of State Harold Brown declared in a threatening tone, "Because the area is the world's greatest source of oil, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf cannot be separated from our security and that of NATO and our allies in Asia. We intend to safeguard the production of oil and its transportation to consumer nations without interference by hostile powers."

The United States government's strategy has been—and especially so since the debacle of troop involvement in Indochina—not to rely on use of its own forces as a first line of defense for its global interests, but to depend on strong, conservative local allies. Three regimes in particular have been prepared and developed by the U.S. to insure preservation of the status quo in the Middle East: Israel, Iran and Saudi Arabia. Senator Henry Jackson, chairman of the Senate Committe on Energy and Natural Resources, offered this explanation: "Such stability as now obtains in the Middle East is, in my view, largely the result of the strength and Western orientation of Israel on the Mediterranean and Iran on the Persian Gulf. These two countries, reliable friends of the United States, together with Saudi Arabia, have served to inhibit and contain those irresponsible and radical elements in certain Arab states—such as Syria, Libya, Lebanon and Iraq—who, were they free to do so, would pose a grave threat to our principle sources of petroleum in the Persian Gulf." □

Solidarity News

NEW PALESTINE SOLIDARITY COMMITTEES FORMING

This past spring and summer saw an upsurge in Palestine Solidary work, with new committees organized or in the process of formation in several cities. In addition to the PSC in New York and the Committee on Palestine and the Middle East in San Francisco, both established over two years ago, committees have been established in the following cities: Washington, D.C., Ann Arbor, Chicago, Pittsburgh and Boston. People in a number of other localities are in the initial stages of establishing committees.

The PSC in New York is opening a resource center to provide the committees, as well as other organizations and individuals, with educational materials for distribution in communities and campuses. The resource center will circulate *Palestine!* on a wider basis, and expand distribution of literature on consignment, slide shows and cultural exhibits.

To obtain the address of a committee in your area, or for assistance in initiating a committee, write to the PSC, P.O. Box 1757 Manhattanville Station, New York, New York 10027.

AID SENT TO REFUGEES IN LEBANON

Readers of *Palestine!* responded to an appeal in the last issue for aid for refugees from the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon by sending contributions totalling $1161. The Palestine Solidarity Committee forwarded the funds to the Palestine Aid Society in Beirut.

PALESTINE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN CONFERENCE

Some 200 people from throughout the United States gathered in Washington, D.C. for a conference of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign on the weekend of May 20-21. They heard, among others, Felicia Langer, an Israeli attorney active in the defense of Palestinian political prisoners; Professor Richard Falk of Princeton University, who argued incisively that Americans concerned about peace in the Middle East must face questions of Palestinian self-determination and human rights; Dr. James Zogby, chairperson of the PHRC; Sally Dinsmore, the PHRC Political Affairs Director; and Priscilla Norris, the PHRC coordinator.

The participants in the conference included a diversity of people: Arab-Americans and Arab students from around the U.S., students and teachers from Michigan active in the defense of Sami Esmail, members of the National Lawyers Guild delegation to the Middle East, representatives of Palestine Solidarity Committees and other organizations involved in work on Middle East issues, as well as representatives of church and peace organizations.

Much of the conference was devoted to workshops in which participants discussed campaigns against Israeli settlements in occupied areas, torture of prisoners, the use of atrocious weapons of U.S. manufacture, other forms of human rights violations and campaigns for the freedom of political prisoners and the return of deportees.

Participants made plans to form local Palestine Human Rights Campaign Working Groups, and to coordinate the work through a steering committee and a permanent structure to be formed at an organizational conference this fall.

*Palestine!*photo

Over 750 marchers protested the Salute to Israel Parade in New York City May 7, at which Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin spoke in commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel. The counter-march demanded an end of U.S. aid to Israel and supported the struggle of the Palestinian people for national rights.

The pro-Palestinian demonstration cheered Zehdi Terzi, the PLO's Observer to the United Nations, and heard Jimmie Durham of the International Indian Treaty Council, Black South African student representative Jeff Dumo Baqua, Sheila Ryan of the Palestine Solidarity Committee and Umm Mohammed of the General Union of Palestinian Women.

Only quick and effective action by demonstration marshals averted clashes at several points with contingents of marchers in the Zionist parade, who tossed bottles and shouted curses at pro-Palestinian demonstrators.

The demonstration was organized by the Palestine Solidarity Committee and a coalition of progressive organizations.

77 U.S. PRISONERS PROTEST U.S. AID TO ISRAEL

A group of 77 prisoners in the Pontiac, Illinois Correctional Center issued a statement of protest against U.S. assistance to Israel and support for the PLO and Palestinian national rights. The prisoners sent their signed statement to the Palestine Solidarity Committee in New York City, which delivered it to the office of the PLO Observer at the United Nations to be forwarded to Beirut.

Their statement declared:

"We the following (incarcerated Muslims) Believers of the Pontiac Correctional Center would like to go on record as being against Zionist aggression and expansion in the Middle East. . . .

"We believe that if the U.S. Government is serious about assisting to help bring about a peaceful and just solution to the explosive situation in the Middle East, it should:

"1. Immediately stop selling fighter-bombers, Skyhawks, Phantoms and F-15 jet fighters to Israel. These fighter-bombers and jet fighter planes were recently used to bring about death and devastation to Lebanese villages and Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, accounting for hundreds of deaths and creating over 260,000 Lebanese refugees.

"2. Apply pressure on Israel by cutting off the $2 billion in military aid and economic assistance which help Israel considerably in its terrible oppression of the Palestinian people and the occupation of Arab land.

"3. It should recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

"4. Recognize the Palestinians' National Rights. These rights include the rights to self-determination, to an independent state in Palestine and for the present Palestinian refugees to be allowed to return to the homes from which they have been exiled.

"5. We call for complete withdrawal from all occupied Arab lands.

The 77 signatures follow the statement.

EXPOSE OF A WHITEWASH

Case of Sami Esmail & Zionist Apologia

In December 1977 Sami Esmail, a U.S. citizen of Palestinian descent, received word that his father was near death in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. He quickly booked a flight, left his studies at Michigan State University and flew to Tel Aviv. When Esmail disembarked he found himself under detention by the Israeli authorities and undergoing a grueling interrogation about involvement with a "terrorist organization."

The arrest of Esmail triggered a more widespread public discussion in the United States and broader protests than had any of the previous tens of thousands of cases of political imprisonment in Israel. Esmail's fellow students and teachers in East Lansing and people across the U.S. made public complaints that Esmail was subjected to torture and victimized for his political views.

These protests were, of course, met with "explanations" by various apologists, official and unofficial, for the Israeli government. The most significant apologia appeared on the op ed page of the *New York Times* on June 2. The authors were Alan Dershowitz and Monroe Freedman, both professors of law with reputations as civil libertarians (Freedman is a candidate for executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union). Dershowitz and Freedman exonerated the Israeli government of serious misconduct, declared that the charges that Esmail had been tortured were fraudulent, and alleged that Esmail's supporters in the U.S. were lying "for propaganda purposes."

The article was obviously intended to prepare public opinion for the announcement of Esmail's conviction, which was to come the following week. (He was later sentenced to fifteen months imprisonment for membership in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], a Palestinian resistance group, and acquitted of contact with enemy agents, since Israeli law specifies that the "agents" must represent an enemy state, whereas Esmail was accused of contact with agents of an organization of Palestinian people, who are, of course, stateless.)

Just days after the *Times* piece the *Washington Post* published an editorial citing the findings of Dershowitz and Freedman as sufficient basis to dismiss any concern over allegations that Esmail had been tortured and mistreated. Those who had written to the Israeli Embassy to protest Esmail's imprisonment soon received reprints of the Dershowitz-Freedman article with little cards conveying "the compliments of the Israeli Embassy."

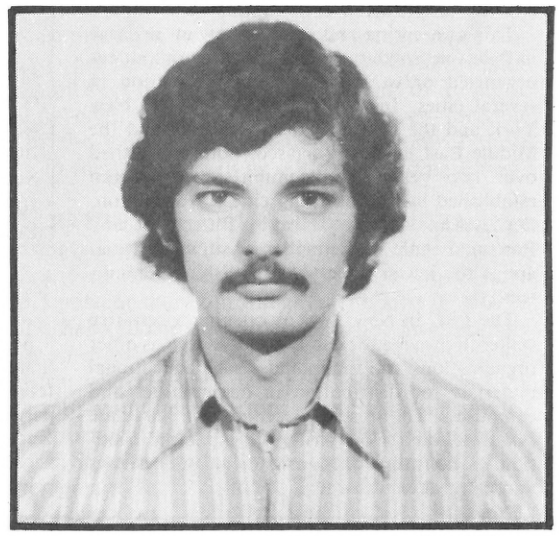
The Dershowitz Freedman piece was clearly part of a well-orchestrated campaign to defuse the mounting protests over Esmail's arrest and to obscure a growing perception in this country that Israel, recipient of U.S. billions and supposedly the only democracy in the Middle East, is, in fact, torturing political prisoners and abridging human rights just like other repressive regimes throughout the world.

The article itself is a combination of half-truths carefully snipped out of context: these half-truths, taken together with their major omissions of fact, add up to a lie—a lie about Sami Esmail's "guilt" and a lie about the Israeli government's innocence.

THE COERCED CONFESSION

An essential element in Dershowitz' and Freedman's defense of Israel's conduct in the Esmail case is a remarkable piece of sophistry meant to "prove" that Esmail was not tortured into making a false confession. Their method is to compare the account of Esmail's mistreatment as given by unnamed supporters in the U.S. to excerpts from Sami Esmail's own account as reported in a written complaint supplied to U.S. Consul General James Kerr. Dershowitz and Freedman state:

> In this complaint, which Mr. Esmail conceded was free and voluntary, there were no claims of repeated beatings or physical torture. His supporters' allegations that he had been "repeatedly punched in the stomach" shrink in his original complaint to "once I was punched—but not very hard—against the chest."



Sami Esmail

The charges of torture, they continue, were so unsubstantial that while "some of Mr. Esmail's supporters have continued to level such charges" his defense attorney, Felicia Langer, in her summation "abandoned allegations of physical torture." Here Dershowitz and Freedman are twisting the truth beyond recognition: at the trial a major issue was the coercion through which a confession was extracted from Esmail. Esmail gave a detailed account of various forms of physical and mental abuse to which he was subjected, but except for the punch in the chest, none of these forms of mistreatment are even hinted at in the *Times.* It is true that the physical mistreatment he describes seems to pale beside the images of mental torture.

The crucial questions, which Dershowitz and Freedman fail utterly to deal with, revolve around the period between December 21 and December 27, 1977: during this time, all accounts—including that of the Israeli government—agree that Esmail was held for interrogation and was refused permission to visit his attorney or his father, whom he knew to be very near death. At the end of this period, after signing three "confessions" Esmail was allowed to consult his attorney, Felicia Langer, for the first time, and was brought under guard to the deathbed of his comatose father.

The account of this period as presented by Felicia Langer and Esmail himself is truly horrifying. Felicia Langer wrote on December 30 in her complaint to the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv that her client had told her that "He was subjected to prolonged (almost 'nonstop') investigation by many interrogators for days, day and night, having a possiblity for no more than two hours of sleep [at a time]." On approximately December 25, according to Professor Robert Barr of Michigan State, Esmail's former teacher, who attended all sessions of the trial and visited Esmail in prison, Esmail began a hunger strike to demand that he be allowed to visit his father; lack of sustenance, compounded by inadequate sleep, must have weakened him significantly.

In testimony before the Israeli court, as related in the official protocol, or report, Esmail gave the following statement of his mistreatment during interrogation:

> Danny, the Chief Interrogator, would always scream at me, slap me, spit at me in an intense way,

> jump on me, undress me, make me stand up, sit down, and tell me how my seventeen and a half years of education are going to come to a stop. . . He would say, "I'm going to get a court order to put you in jail for 15 days, then 30 days, and I will personally go to the Chief of Staff to make sure you will stay the minimum of 6 months in that cell. . .

Here Dershowitz can learn how "administrative detention," the Israeli practice he once justified in an article in *Commentary,* actually works in practice: for Esmail is describing his interrogator's threat to invoke the old Emergency Regulations of the British colonial period, permitting the authorities to hold persons indefinitely, without charges.

The most serious form of mental coercion which Esmail describes related to his dying father:

> Also he ["Danny"] told me how my father was going to die because of me; he and the others would make fake telephone calls to a hospital in Ramallah saying that my father had just had a heart attack, etc.—that I should sign a paper and then he will allow me to go to see my father.

Sami Esmail told the court that on December 26 he wrote a seven page statement acknowledging that he distributed the PFLP paper in Michigan and had traveled to Libya. In this statement he said clearly that he had been offered military training while in Libya, but had declined because the training required a committment of six months' service, which he was unwilling to undertake. Later on the same day, December 26, Esmail told the court, he finally signed incriminating statements. The court protocol for March 26 records Esmail's account:

> They (the interrogators) said, "Read it," the seven pages that I had. I read it, and then they began all over again. The same story: "You're going to rot. You're going to die. You're going to ruin your education. We're going to come in and interrogate you by the hour and drive you insane unless you write down that you were trained and went to a camp." I said, "I could not do that because it never happened." They tried to induce me. I hadn't eaten or drunk anything for two days. . . Then after two hours of just hassling I went hysterical.
>
> They said, "What do you want?" I said, "I want to go to see my father." They said, "You have to say this." I said, "Whatever you want. Go ahead, write." He [the interrogator] started dictating. I wrote it lying down. I was crying. I was a complete wreck. My nerves were killing me. I wrote.

Esmail says that he signed page nine of this "confession" and dated it December 26, as he had been ordered, even though it was approximately 4 a.m., December 27. On the following day, Esmail reported, he signed a third, more incriminating, confession, this one in Hebrew, a language which he does not speak.

After the signing of the confessions, Esmail said, and the official account agrees, he was allowed to visit his father, by then unable to recognize his son, and was permitted to consult Felicia Langer.

The utter failure of Dershowitz and Freedman to even recount, much less to attempt to disprove, Esmail's description of these forms of coercion leads one to wonder if the law professors consider these practices quite acceptable. Are they willing to allow the Israeli police special latitude to extract confessions by means they would protest if employed in other countries—in the U.S. for example? How would Dershowitz and Freedman respond to a client in an American jail who told them that he had been repeatedly slapped, questioned day and night for a week, deprived of more

Authors Conceal Bias

To the casual reader, one of the most impressive aspects of the Dershowitz-Freedman article is the author's claim that before the trial they had been so alarmed by reports of Israeli human rights violations and moved by the "overwhelming" evidence of Esmail's innocence presented by his supporters in the U.S. that "we arranged to attend Mr. Esmail's trial in Tel Aviv, as independent observers, to see for ourselves."

Now, if Dershowitz and Freedman had not made such a point of denying to their readers the actual bias they brought with them to Israel, one might be tempted to omit entirely the sorry record which Dershowitz in particular has as a defender of repression by Israel, to ignore his previous hatchet jobs on Palestinian political prisoners and Israeli civil libertarians, and to deal only with the factual distortions in their article.

But if Dershowitz was ever, as he writes, "deeply disturbed by reports of systematic violations" of human rights in Israel, his distress appears to have been caused by the fact that the reoprts were issued rather than that the violations may have occurred. Dershowitz' history of public defense of Israeli repressive practices extends at least to December 1970, when he published an article in *Commentary* offering excuses for Israel's draconian administrative detention policy, which allows indefinite detention without trial or even charges in order to protect the "security" of the state. Although Dershowitz made some mild criticism of administrative detention, he claimed: "I know of no country—including my own—that has ever exposed its wartime population to so much risk in the interest of civil liberties."

Dershowitz did not limit himself to defending the Israeli government, but went further to viciously attack a Palestinian poet and journalist, Fouzi el-Asmar, then imprisoned under the administrative detention provisions. Dershowitz flatly described el-Asmar as a "terrorist," claiming as justification for his verdict his perusal of raw data in a police file, then presented to him by a man "whose name I was never told," who was introduced to him as the head of the Arab division of Shin Beth, Israeli intelligence. On the basis of examination of a letter in Arabic (a language Dershowitz does not read), Dershowitz wrote that el-Asmar was "the head of a gang of murderers," although he acknowledged that he had seen nothing which could have brought conviction of el-Asmar in a court.

More recently, in a series of letters to the Boston *Globe* Dershowitz attacked Dr. Israel Shahak, a highly respected Israeli civil libertarian. Dershowitz charged that Shahak was not, as he claimed to be, chairman of the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights, and wrote that an Israeli court had upheld the results of an election in which Shahak was put out of office. In fact, as Dr. Noam Chomsky pointed out to *Globe* readers, the court had actually ruled the election results invalid because of outrageous unfair tactics employed by members of the Labor Party.

The "independence" of Monroe Freedman's observations at Esmail's trial is brought into serious question by the fact, as Freedman acknowledged elsewhere, that his trip was initiated and paid for by Howard Fishman, a Zionist attorney in New York, who sponsored Freedman's trip in the hope that he would counter any reports prepared by Earnest Goodman, whom the National Lawyers Guild had selected as its observer at the trial.

than two consecutive hours of sleep, threatened with indefinite detention, tormented by false reports of the death of an aged parent, and finally, after two days without food or drink, induced to sign a false confession with the promise of a visit to a dying father? Would Dershowitz and Freedman absolve police in the U.S. of all wrong doing in such a case because whereas a distraught friend or relative had told them the detainee had been *punched* repeatedly the defendant himself said he had been punched only once, but *slapped* repeatedly?

Dershowitz in particular has been a staunch partisan of the Soviet dissident Anatoly Shcharansky: it is inconceivable that Dershowitz would have failed to report charges such as Esmail made if Shcharansky had leveled them at Soviet authorities; indeed, he would doubtless have denounced the Soviet government in scathing terms.

THE LEGAL PROCESS

Freedman and Dershowitz made one complaint about the prosecution of Esmail so relatively minor that they seem to praise Israel by their faint damnation. They write that they wish the confession had been ruled inadmissable because Esmail's attorney was not allowed to see him before he made the statements, as U.S. courts require under the Miranda rule. They comment that:

> In fairness to Israel, however, it should be noted that the Miranda rule was not adopted in the United States until after almost two centuries of constitutional development.
>
> The Esmail case, which began with loudly trumpeted charges of severe violations of human rights is now turning upon extremely sophisticated issues of due process, like the Miranda rule. Such issues could be raised in few countries in the world—and in no other Middle Eastern country.

Here Dershowitz and Freedman are deviously shifting the grounds of the debate from the central question—was Esmail's confession voluntary, or was it extracted by physical and/or mental coercion—to a subsidiary procedural question. As these two law professors surely know, the Miranda rule was issued by the Supreme Court especially to protect defendants from having confessions extracted against their will. Crudely stated, the police are not going to beat a confession out of a prisoner in the presence of his lawyer. Although the Miranda rule is new, the principle which its procedures are designed to protect—the voluntariness of confession—is very ancient. In the Anglo-Saxon legal tradition it dates back at least to the repudiation of the Star Chamber in the seventeenth century, and is embodied in the two centuries' old Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. And while the procedural rights under the Miranda rule may be "extremely sophisticated," the basic legal principle of voluntary confession is simple common sense. Revulsion against the rack and rubber hose aside, any sensible person can assume that at some point of pain and psychological anguish almost anyone will confess to a crime which he committed—or to one which he did not commit. A coerced confession is simply not very believable.

Dershowitz and Freedman neglect to apply another legal principle—which also is neither new nor "extremely sophisticated"—intended to safeguard the voluntariness and truthfulness of confessions: adequate corroboration. Although the Israeli Embassy in the U.S. had boasted before the trial that Israeli requirements of corroborating evidence would ensure that Esmail could not be convicted on the basis of a false confession, these requirements are hollow and ineffectual. Whereas in the U.S., there must be evidence to corroborate an element in the confession relating to the crime itself, in Israel the evidence can "corroborate" any portion of the defendant's statement, no matter how irrelevant to the charges. Earnest Goodman, the National Lawyers Guild observer at the trial, reported that in Esmail's case, the prosecution presented as corroboration only Esmail's U.S. passport and—to "prove" a casual point in Esmail's confession concerning his education—testimony from the principal of the Friends School in Ramallah, which Esmail had attended as a child. Since neither attendance at a Quaker school nor possession of a U.S. passport is a crime in Israel, it is clear that Esmail could not have been convicted were it not for his own confession. Goodman commented that "If independent corroboration of an element of the crime was required it was apparent that no such evidence was available to the prosecution."

THE CHARGES AGAINST ESMAIL

Dershowitz and Freedman not only tailor the truth to fit their purpose of exonerating the Israeli government of mistreating Esmail; they also follow a twisting path of argument to show that Esmail was not tried unfairly for his political activities outside Israel but was legitimately prosecuted as a member of a "terrorist organization." Their argument begins thus:

> The Israelis maintain that Esmail is a member of an extremist group, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and that he received terrorist training in Libya in August 1976. Mr. Esmail's supporters vehemently denied that he had any terrorist involvement and, indeed, that he is being prosecuted for conduct in the United States that the First Amendment protects, such as raising funds, on his campus, for the Popular Front.

Paragraphs later Dershowitz and Freedman triumphantly clinch their argument by reporting that Esmail told the Israeli court that he had indeed traveled to Libya, and with that, apparently, rest their case against him. Their rationale goes thus: Israel claims that Esmail belongs to a terrorist organization and was trained in Libya, and Esmail admits he traveled to Libya, therefore Esmail is a member of a terrorist organization and is appropriately being prosecuted.

In propounding this dubious argument, Dershowitz and Freedman omit four inconvenient points.

First, Dershowitz and Freedman never tell their readers that Sami Esmail denied at his trial that he was a member of the PFLP; the only "proof" of his membership is contained in his confession, which, as previously discussed, Esmail reports was involuntary and untrue. His attorney, Felicia Langer, in a phone call to the U.S. shortly after Sami Esmail's sentencing, said that her client "was speaking sympathetically and demonstrating support, but was not a member [of the PFLP]."

Second, they also fail to acknowledge to their readers that while admitting travel to Libya, Esmail denied during his trial that he had received military training there. The only "evidence" of military training in Libya is contained in Esmail's confession, which, of course, he later repudiated as involuntary and false. Dershowitz and Freedman, while concealing this fact from their readers, apparently try to pass off Esmail's admission of his trip to Libya as *prima facie* evidence of military training. This is patently absurd: people do travel to Libya for many reasons unrelated to military training. Robert Barr, the Michigan State faculty member who attended Esmail's trial reports Esmail's explanation of his trip:

> The trip was paid for by the Libyan Socialist Arab Political Party in celebration of the seventh anniversary of the Libyan revolution and in an effort to attract intellectuals who might at some future date come to live in Libya. Sami was interested in considering the possibility of teaching in a Libyan university after he completed his Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering.

Apparently unsatisfied with condemning Sami Esmail himself on the basis of his admitted travel to Libya, Dershowitz and

Freedman use this admission in an attempt to nail Esmail's supporters in the U.S. as well. After reporting Esmail's acknowledgment of travel to Libya for two weeks in August 1976, Dershowitz and Freedman comment:

> thus his supporters who swore that he was in Ohio then were either mistaken or lying. That critical admission provides an acid test of the credibility of some of Mr. Esmail's supporters and the credulity of others who may once have had reason to join in his defense but now must question whether their humanitarian impulses have been cynically manipulated for propaganda purposes.

In their scramble to impose the worst possible interpretation upon the actions and motivations of Mr. Esmail's supporters in the U.S., Dershowitz and Freedman kick aside a few key facts. Esmail's acknowledgment of travel to Libya hardly hit the trial like a bombshell: he had been freely admitting his trip to any agent of any government who inquired about it, at least since November 1976 when FBI agents in East Lansing questioned him about it. He had traveled to Libya under his own name and passport, and admitted the trip again to Israeli authorities at Lod Airport even before his actual arrest.

It is true that while Esmail was freely admitting his Libyan trip in Israel, the National Committee to Defend the Human Rights of Sami Esmail was denying in East Lansing that Esmail had visited Libya. The National Committee, however, explains that the discrepancy was the result of honest confusion, arising from the misleading statements of Israeli officials:

> In late December we learned that Sami had been arrested and that the Israelis charged that he had undergone military training in Libya for *four* weeks in August 1976. (see *Michigan State News,* January 19, 1978)
>
> Immediately we began contacting Sami's friends in East Lansing and Columbus and we learned that a number of them had seen Sami during the month of August 1976 both in East Lansing and Columbus. . . In fact, as we later discovered, Sami had been in East Lansing during the early part of the month of August and after the 28th in Columbus, Ohio. From this the Committee reasonably and in good faith inferred that Sami had not been in Libya.

Third, Dershowitz and Freedman never explain that Esmail was not accused of any hostile act against Israel, but only of offenses of membership and association, which civil libertarians generally insist ought not be crimes but democratic rights. In the weeks following Esmail's arrest, Israeli officials made some wild allegations to the effect that Esmail was an "explosives expert" on a "terrorist mission." By the time of the trial, however, these accusations had been quietly dropped, and the authorities were conceding that Esmail was in Israel only to visit his dying father.

But in Israel "membership" in a Palestinian resistance organization is a crime in and of itself, even if the member has never taken any violent action against Israel. If they were consistent Dershowitz and Freedman ought to oppose criminality of membership in any organization—even if they disagree with its objectives and methods. After all, Freedman supported the ACLU's legal defense of the "first amendment rights" of the Klan and Nazis in the United States. Would Freedman accord to the Nazis in the U.S. civil rights he would deny to the Palestinians under Israeli rule?

Fourth, Dershowitz and Freedman leave to totter as though it were a mere unsubstantiated assertion of Esmail's supporters the claim that Esmail was being prosecuted for constitutionally protected political activity in the U.S. They fail to inform their readers that this is not only "asserted" by Esmail's supporters, but also backed up by the indictment against Esmail and the prosecution's case as presented at the trial. After all, as Dershowitz and Freedman could not help knowing, it is in Michigan, not Libya nor still less Israel, that Esmail is charged with having joined the PFLP and contacted the first of two "foreign agents." The indictment alleges:

> 1) The accused is a resident citizen of the U.S., living in Lansing, Michigan.
> 2) The accused studied at the University of Michigan from 1972 until 1975. . .
> 3) In 1975, during his studies, he met Abu Bakr Maddour from Libya, an activist in the terrorist

Sami Esmail is but one of some 3500 Palestinians imprisoned by Israel for "security reasons." Some of these prisoners are administrative detainees, held without charges for periods that can extend indefinitely. Others are alleged to have committed a wide range of acts of resistance, from distribution of leaflets to military action. All are subjected to inhuman conditions, particularly overcrowding, inadequate food and medical care, and lack of reasonable access to families. Particularly during the interrogation period, many detainees are brutally tortured. Inmates in a number of prisons have waged repeated hunger strikes and other forms of protest to demand improvement in their conditions.

organization the "Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine," henceforth termed "the Front."
4) The accused held long and periodic meetings with the foreign agent Abu Bakr and in these meetings was instructed by Abu Bakr, who informed him among other things of the aims of the "Front," i.e., an organization with a leftist-Marxist-Socialist ideology whose aim is to fight world imperialism, Arab reaction, Zionism and the State of Israel. That is, to destroy the state of Israel by force.
5) The accused was enthusiastic [in] following the request of Abu Bakr to distribute copies of the "Front" newspaper among Arab students of the University and after he had made a donation to the "Front."

By their evasion of the fact that the charges against Esmail are substantially accusations about his political activity in the U.S., Dershowitz and Freedman are trying to keep themselves off two very awkward hooks. The first involves the strong likelihood that the FBI furnished information on Esmail's political activities in Michigan to the Israelis. How do these civil libertarian law professors feel about data on political surveillance of U.S. citizens being furnished to foreign governments? In cases like Esmail's, such transfer of information could "convict" a person in Israel on the basis of acts perfectly legal in the U.S.

And second, what about the issue of extraterritorial jurisdiction in this case? Dershowitz and Freedman neglect any serious examination of this question, but whereas legal systems generally require that a court can only try a person for offenses allegedly committed within its own jurisdiction, Israeli courts claim the entire world as their jurisdiction on a wide range of political offenses. According to the Israeli Penal Code, Israeli courts have the right:

> to try under Israeli law a person who has committed an act abroad which would be an offense if it had been committed in Israel and which harmed, or was intended to harm the State of Israel, its security, property or economy or its transport or communications links with other countries.

Such an extension of jurisdiction over the whole world—including the U.S., its campuses and newspapers—certainly deserves at least a word or two from Freedman and Dershowitz. As Earnest Goodman, the National Lawyers Guild observer comments, this use of extraterritorial jurisdiction contradicts generally recognized international principles. Goodman contrasts Israel's extraterritorial law with certain "extraterritorial laws" in the U.S., dealing with counterfeit currency, drug trade, false affadavits to obtain U.S. visas and anti-trust violations. There are clear differences, he explains:

> It should be noted that these offenses are specific and generally recognized crimes; that they would be considered as crimes in most countries (with the possible exception of anti-trust conspiracies); that they are designed and intended to create harm within this country and that they do not relate to the dissemination of ideas or political views or the carrying on of political activities.
>
> The extension of the concept of extraterritorial jurisdiction over non-citizens to "security" crimes committed elsewhere which involve the dissemination of political ideas and support of political movements is, in my opinion, a dangerous development. This is particularly true where the political activities are constitutionally protected by the state of the accused.

THE ISSUE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

Toward the end of their article Dershowitz and Freedman reveal their intentions: not only to reduce support for Esmail, but also to defuse criticism in this country of Israel's treatment of political prisoners generally. They write:

> Mr. Esmail's case does appear "typical" in at least one important respect. In view of the deliberate and demonstrable lies in the Esmail case, therefore, allegations of systematic violations of human rights by Israel must be viewed with more than a little skepticism.

Their argument here is absurd, of course. First of all, they nowhere in their article exposed a single "deliberate and demonstrable" lie. Paragraphs before they themselves were willing to grant the possiblity that Esmail's friends had been "mistaken" in placing him in the U.S. when he was actually in Libya. Even if the authors have actually uncovered one or two insignificant inconsistencies as to detail between Esmail's own testimony and statements of his unnamed suporters, Dershowitz and Freedman never tried to prove that these minor differences are the result of "deliberate and demonstrable lies." (Was Esmail "punched repeatedly," or "punched once" and "slapped repeatedly?" What difference does it really make?)

Secondly, even if Esmail had been treated impeccably by Israel and if he and his supporters had lied outrageously, why should that diminish concern about mistreatment of the approximately 3500 other political prisoners now in Israeli jails? Any objective reading of the many documents and reports issued over the last few years on the plight of political prisoners in Israel would indicate that the Israeli government is guilty of very extensive violations of the human rights of prisoners. For example:

- The London *Sunday Times* in June 1977 published the report of its detailed inquiry into the use of torture against political prisoners in Israel. The report included detailed accounts of prolonged beatings, the use of electric shock, confinement to tiny spaces, brutal abuse of their relatives in front of prisoners, immersion in cold water and other horrifying practices. The *Sunday Times* concluded, "Torture is organised so methodically that it cannot be dismissed as a handful of 'rogue cops' exceeding orders. It is systematic. It appears to be sanctioned at some level as deliberate policy."
- The *Sunday Times* also reported its determination that, according to documents it had examined belonging to the International Committee of the Red Cross—the ICRC itself does not divulge its findings in such cases—the ICRC had passed along to the Israeli government at least 200 formal complaints of the torture or ill treatment of prisoners.
- In its report in 1970 the United Nations Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories found "a regular practice of ill-treating inmates." Its annual report of that year and later ones contain numerous accounts of testimony from former detainees detailing brutal forms of torture and mistreatment.

Furthermore, many highly specific reports from Israeli sources, including attorneys Felicia Langer and Leah Tsemel and chairman of the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights, Dr. Israel Shahak, describe countless cases of torture and abuse of detainees.

Dershowitz, Freedman and the Israeli government clearly became concerned that publicity surrounding the case of Sami Esmail would intensify the urgency with which questions are beginning to be raised in the United States about the issue of Palestinian political prisoners in Israel. Dershowitz and Freedman are participating in a cover-up of disturbing facts in the Esmail case—a cover-up intended to obscure the broader issue of some 3500 current cases of political detention and the torture and mistreatment of those prisoners on a massive level. □

Lebanese Progressive (cont. from page 1)

Palestine! Have the militias of the Lebanese National Movement been able to return to the positions which they occupied prior to the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon in March? The press reported that the U.N. troops have attempted to prevent "infiltration" of armed men behind their lines in parts of southern Lebanon.

Raad: Concerning the militias there are two facts to be established. First, the Lebanese National Movement's militia fought and withdrew with the Palestinian resistance, but they withdrew resisting the invasion very bravely. This militia is now situated in those parts which were not occupied by the Israelis.

The second fact is that among the citizens of the different villages which fell under occupation, we have stong national bases among the peasants of the villages. These political bases did not withdraw; they are part of the population and they are there. The national existence of the Lebanese National Movement could not be evicted as if we are troops that come and go. It's not the motion of troops: we are part of the population and we remain there.

Palestine! How would you characterize the role of UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon)?

Raad: As we understood it, U.N. Resolution 425, which authorized the creation of UNIFIL, has as its aim the replacing of the Israeli troops with UNIFIL troops—in other words, to help Lebanon regain sovereignty over its lost land. But in the beginning the U.N. task force, especially the French Legion, tried to implement another policy: it assumed the role of a police force and tried to meddle in certain local and Lebanese problems. It tried to enter the town of Tyre and assume some jurisdiction vis-a-vis the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese National Movement. Of course this was a point which we protested. Recently the UNIFIL troops have attempted to keep more to their basic mission.

The U.N. forces have reached agreement with the leadership of the PLO restricting the presence of armed Palestinian troops in certain areas. But no international jurisdiction can prevail over the Lebanese National Movement, nor can it prevent us from being in our towns and villages.

CONTRADICTIONS AMONG THE RIGHT

Palestine! How do you assess the contradictions among the reactionary Lebanese which recently exploded into violence?

Raad: First, this violence challenges the pretence of the rightists that the Christians are in danger and that the right is defending the Christians. The rightists groups are now killing each other, killing the Christians. If there is any danger which is threatening the Christians, it's these rightist militias.

Second, among the right there are pro-Zionist groups: we call them the Zionists of the interior. They represent a new process which Israel has launched again Lebanon: to "Zionize," if I may use the term, part of the population, to alienate it from the national cause and make it stooges, helping Israeli aggression.

This is a new edition of the old "eastern question" when foreign powers meddled in the affairs of the Middle East on the pretence of protecting the minorities. Israel is just giving a new Zionist edition of this old eastern question, on the pretence that the Christians are in danger, on a sectarian basis.

Third, the Franjieh clan [headed by Suleiman Franjieh, former president of Lebanon], although it is rightist, did not take part in the hostilities in southern Lebanon and did not form an alliance with Israel. They are pro-Syrian to a certain extent. The Franjieh family is one of the leading feudal families in Lebanon. They couldn't tolerate the spreading of the Phalange Party, which is an organized fascist pro-Zionist group.

We, as nationalists, progressives and socialists, are with the minor contradiction against the major one in such a conflict. In other words, we are with those who, although rightists are not pro-Zionist, with the unorganized traditional feudal or clan-based group, Franjieh, aginst the organized fascist party, the Phalange.

Palestine! How likely is the danger of a partition of Lebanon, a conversion of the de facto division into a formal and permanent one?

Raad: We had believed that the danger was imminent, but it started to subside recently. After the feuding arose between the Phalange and the Franjieh group, the danger lessened. This is because the Franjieh group has got hold of most of the Christian areas in northern Lebanon and this leaves the Phalange along with Chamoun [former Lebanese President Camille Chamoun, head of the rightist National Liberal Party, who has also feuded with the Phalange] in a very tight circle—not more than two [parliamentary] constituencies in the whole of Lebanon. I mean, they can't make a separate "Maronite homeland" in such a small space.

UNFAVORABLE BALANCE OF POWER

Palestine! How do you evaluate the prospects for the basic reforms in society which the Lebanese National Movement has been demanding?

Raad: We don't feel that there is a good prospect for those reforms at this time, for more than one reason. First, the Lebanese situation is intimately related to the Arab situation. And in the Arab world there is a fear of any radical change in Lebanon, a fear that it might lead the way to change elsewhere in the Arab world. The Arab world now is mostly conservative and reactionary.

Secondly, the international balance of power is against the progressive movements in the Arab world. Even as we look at the change overrunning Africa and Asia, we see that the status quo is strengthened in our area, because U.S. imperialism is successfully supporting the continuation of the status quo as the path to the oil wealth of Arabia. For the U.S. government, Lebanon is part of the energy problem, rather than a country having ambitions to progress and peace.

There is a real Arab and international obstruction to change. As evidence of this attempt to maintain the status quo, I can draw from an event that happened in April, when a sort of compromise was reached among the traditional isolationist Christians and the traditional Moslem leaders when their representatives in parliament accepted the so-called Committee of 13's "National Reconciliation Pact." This pact aimed at excluding the Lebanese left from any say in Lebanese affairs and at restricting the Palestinian resistance. It was known, and even written about in the newspapers, even with pride in the rightist newspapers, that it was the U.S. ambassador who forged the pact. Why? The U.S. is supporting the reactionary class because it does not want change to take place in Lebanon.

I'd like you to note something. Although the Lebanese National Movement includes in its membership parties of the left, yet it has a liberal democratic program. We don't have in our program anything concerning socialism: we simply demand separation of church and state and certain reforms like separation of the parliamentary and executive parts of government. But even these minor reforms are obstructed because the U.S. doesn't want the force of change to move in the rotten, decaying society which is a continuation of the Ottoman Empire.

Palestine! In view of this general assessment of the unfavorable balance of forces in the Arab area, how do you see the immediate goals of the Lebanese National Movement?

Raad: For the Lebanese National Movement it is a matter of stages in struggle. We believe that the present stage is one of first supporting the re-establishment of Lebanese unity against the danger of secession, which was, to a certain extent, imminent a year ago; second, neutralizing the South against pro-Zionist collaborators; third, supporting [Lebanese] President Sarkis as the one legal authority; fourth, and this is the most important thing, [working so] that the apparatus of the state should be democratic and not coercive.

If our reforms are not accepted at this stage, at least let the state apparatus be democratic so that, hopefully, the struggle for change will continue. If we achieve democracy we can fight for further reforms. □

PLO (continued from page 1)

Palestinians, the dispersal of half their people outside their homeland, and their concentration in the surrounding Arab states has historically left the Palestinian national movement particularly vulnerable to the political vicissitudes of the area. Furthermore, the Palestinians, having no territory of their own to use as a base from which to struggle against the Israeli occupation, must find areas in the surrounding states for political and military activity; and while the Palestinian struggle is distinct from the conflict between Israel and the Arab states whose land is occupied, it is still closely related to and profoundly influenced by the progess or regression of that conflict.

The drift of the Middle East into the U.S. orbit, and the rise in power of reaction in the region began after the June War in 1967. There are those who link the 1967 war to a series of events within a years span of the June War—the coup of the Greek colonels, the overthrow of Sukarno in Indonesia and Nkruma in Ghana, and the U.S. escalation of the war in Vietnam—and hypothesize that the U.S. government gave Israel the go-ahead, at least implicitly, to participate in a global imperialist onslaught. In any case, the lightening victory of the Israeli troops discredited the "nationalist" regimes in the area: Nasser was exposed as not only unable to liberate Palestine, but even incapable of defending Egyptian territory.

Within the next few years there was a clear turn to the right: after Nasser's death, the new regime in Egypt turned some state enterprises back to private capitalists, forced the Soviet advisers and technicians out and welcomed back Western business and U.S. influence. In 1970 with the ouster of the Jedid faction from the Syrian Ba'ath, that regime moved towards the right. With the enormous increase in proceeds from its oil in the seventies the Saudi regime—which had been seen as something of historical relic not long before—began to invest and wield massive political power in Egypt and throughout the region.

An ironic and contradictory exception to this turn to the right in the Middle East following the June War was the rise of the Palestinian fedayeen. The discrediting of the nationalist regimes, which had paved the way for the rise of the right elsewhere in the region, showed the Palestinians that they themselves, not Nasser nor any other hero, would liberate their homeland.

This shift to the right was exacerbated in the aftermath of the October 1973 war. The U.S. government, alarmed by the oil boycott, began to assert a much stronger political presence in the region. Saudi Arabia, the financier of the Arab right, and Egypt, its political powerhouse, looked to the U.S. to pressure Israel to agree to a settlement.

It was not entirely clear after the October war, however, that any settlement in the area would be a Pax Americana; a political settlement of the conflict with Israel did appear to be on the agenda, but the Soviet Union, a co-convener with the U.S. of the Geneva Conference, seemed to have a role in the process of negotiation. The apparent imminence of a settlement generated a series of advances on the Palestinian issue which aimed to take as much advantage as possible of the situation, and to prevent a settlement from being made over the heads of the Palestinians. The Rabat Summit conference of Arab states and the U.N. General Assembly recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Uprisings in the West Bank emphasized the determination of the Palestinians to be free of occupation and exercise national sovereignty. The local struggle and the international diplomacy were aimed at assuring that Jordan's King Hussein, as self-appointed representative of the Palestinians, could not negotiate with Israel over the West Bank, and that the Palestine issue would be recognized as a national question, not a mere humanitarian problem of refugees.

However, the struggle for a "nationalist" political settlement did not advance to fruition. Egyptian President Sadat's diplomatic initiative at the end of 1977 made manifest that the only political settlement on the agenda was an imperialist solution—and Israeli intransigence makes imposition of even a settlement such as that very unlikely.

THE PALESTINIAN DILEMNA

Since the Sadat initiative particularly, the PLO has been thrown into a dilemna: how to preserve national independence and continue the struggle for national rights in a time when momentum is on the side of reaction. Its problems were seriously compounded by the very unfavorable situation in Lebanon. The feuding right-wing groups control part of Lebanon, and Israel, through its surrogate Major Sa'ad Haddad, commander of the rightists in southern Lebanon, continues to dominate sections of the South even after withdrawal of Zionist ground troops in June. Most of the remainder of Lebanon is policed by Syrian troops, for the moment on the side of the PLO, but as their invasion of Lebanon on the side of the right two years ago demonstrated, they were hardly firm allies or great respecters of Palestian independence. Another section of strife-ridden Lebanon is patrolled by UNIFIL, dispatched to southern Lebanon by the U.N. to supervise the Israeli withdrawal, but displaying an occasional tendency to considerably exceed that role.

The PLO thus is forced to maneuver in a very tight space. Two general tendencies of response have developed, and the differences between the two tendencies are at the core of the tragically violent conflict among the groups in the PLO. The two tendencies are not always absolutely distinguished with perfect clarity and definition, but the approaches are roughly as follows:

One point of view, in its most exaggerated form, recalls that in difficult periods in the past, the Palestinian movement survived by living in the interstices of Arab politics, by playing on the contradictions between the Arab states. This opinion, aware of the power of Syria over the PLO, is anxious not to totally sever connections with Sadat, reasoning that however much Sadat may have betrayed the Palestinians, he is still Syria's antagonist. On the central question of a negotiated political settlement, this point of view is intent on not coming into contradiction with Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Those who hold this position tend to subscribe to the tenet of the Arab right that "100 percent of the cards are in the hands of the U.S." Thus they hesitate to reject totally the efforts of the Arab reactionary regimes to press for the imposition of a settlement under U.S. auspices, believing that: (a) opposition would arouse the ire of Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and needlessly so, since their pressure on the U.S. will prove to be futile anyway; and/or (b) a political settlement may well be inevitable and thus the only Palestinian option is to obtain whatever they can from the U.S. via the conservative regimes.

The opposing opinion holds that the threat of a settlement under U.S. auspices poses a real danger to the Palestinian struggle; that even if no settlement is actually implemented, the process of movement toward settlement could seriously weaken the PLO through pressure from the U.S., which is intent on liquidating the resistance movement, and from the reactionary forces in the region, which will assist actively toward that objective. This point of view maintains that the Palestinians have nothing to gain from a political settlement in such an unfavorable period, and that the PLO must mobilize against the momentum towards a "solution" which betrays the Palestinian cause.

THE OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE

These differences first broke into violence not in confrontation between the main antagonists, but on the initiative of Abu Nidal, an ex-Fateh militant who has found shelter and support in Iraq. Abu Nidal is wild and erratically violent in his opposition to the Fateh leadership, whom he has accused in the crudest forms of betraying the Palestinian struggle. In January of this year responsibility for the assassination of Said Hamami, the PLO representative in London, was attributed to Abu Nidal's group. This was a grave act, not only because it robbed the life of Hamami, but also because it presaged the resort to violence to settle political differences among the Palestinians.

There were no serious outbreaks between January and April. Then Fateh units, said to be under the leadership of Abu Jihad (second in command to Yasser Arafat and characterized as a "rightist") arrested 123 commandos led by Abu Dawoud in

southern Lebanon. (The forces under Dawoud's immediate leadership were said to be tied to Abu Saleh, a top leader in Fateh.) Abu Dawoud's force had taken a rather more hostile view of the UNIFIL troops than had the Fateh leadership. All but 16 of the detainees were later released, but this action was the real beginning of use of armed force to deal with political disputes. Unlike the action against Hamami by Abu Nidal, who could be described as peripheral, even irrational in his actions, this was a confrontation between a part of the leadership of Fateh and a significant force within it. The dissidents became known as the National and Democratic Line Within Fateh.

On June 15, Ali Yassin, the PLO representative in Kuwait was assassinated. The Fateh leadership announced that he had been killed by Abu Nidal's band with the cooperation of Iraq; others claimed he died in a factional dispute with Fateh. The PLO Executive Committee formally warned Iraq to stop supporting Abu Nidal, and to hand him over to the PLO.

Then on July 13 and 14, Fateh cracked down on the Palestine Liberation Front fedayeen in southern Lebanon. (The PLF had split from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command during the Lebanese civil war when the PFLP-GC refused to oppose the Syrian invasion.) After the PLF commandos kidnapped a number of UNIFIL troops, in reaction to UNIFIL's surrounding of a group of Palestinian fedayeen behind the U.N. lines, Fateh units arrested about 40 PLF commandos. As many as 12 people were reported killed and wounded in the clash on July 13. On the following day a grenade thrown into the office of the Arab Liberation Front, allied to the PLF, killed two people.

On July 19 mainstream Fateh members attacked Abu Nidal's office in Libya, killing two members of that group. Fighting was reported between Iraqi and Fateh students in Peking. The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine announced that three of its fighters on a supply mission in southern Lebanon had been seized at a checkpoint by Fateh members, killed and their bodies mutilated. The Fateh leadership announced that two Fateh men had been executed for commission of crimes; Abu Dawoud declared that the two were heroes of Tal az Za'atar and not criminals, and were executed in reality for their political opposition to the direction taken by the Fateh leadership. Fighting broke out in northern Lebanon in the Bedawi camp, pitting Fateh and PFLP-GC units against other fedayeen; 50 casualties were reported.

Then in August the battleground shifted to embassies and offices around the world. Attackers thought to be associated with Fateh bungled an attempt on the Iraqi ambassador in London, shot their way into the Iraqi Embassy in Paris and wounded the Iraqi ambassador in Karachi. In retaliation two PLO officials were murdered with hand grenades and gunfire in Paris, and three Palestinians died when the PLO office in Islamabad was attacked. Abu Nidal and Iraq were blamed for these attacks.

Certainly the conflict with Iraq contributed to the tragic shedding of blood. The causes of the tension are not difficult to determine, though it is hard to say why the contradiction was felt to be so serious that armed means were used. Some of the differences between the PLO leadership and Iraq are on strategy: Iraq "rejected" as a betrayal of the cause the PLO's program of struggle for an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza. Other problems seem to involve the role of Syria, whose Ba'athist regime is a perenially bitter rival of the Ba'athists in power in Baghdad. When the Syrian regime sent 30,000 troops into Lebanon during the civil war (and when it keeps these troops there as a police force), it forced the PLO to consider very carefully how Syria would consider its every step. The PLO and Syria were forced into even greater proximity when Sadat's diplomatic initiative left them both out in the cold.

The harboring of Abu Nidal was certainly a very sore point: in its warning to Iraq the PLO Executive Committee reasonably pointed out that Abu Nidal could not operate without sanctuary and cooperation from the Iraqi government. The outrage at the assassination of PLO officials and the PLO denunciations of the role of Iraq in these deaths have generated a strong popular base among Palestinians for repudiation of Iraqi interference in Palestinian politics.

On the other hand, some observers charged that the Fateh "right" lent itself to the intensification of the propaganda war with Iraq and to the actual shootouts in various cities in a not entirely necessary way for an opportunistic reason—to create a smokescreen for its move against the left within Fateh and leftist and rejectionist organizations within the PLO. Obviously Iraq is not behind all the political disagreements among the Palestinian organizations.

DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL DEBATE

In mid-May, in the aftermath of the arrest of the Fateh commandos in April, five organizations issued a "Joint Statement to the Central Committee of Fateh," delineating the perspective of one of the sides in the inter-Palestinian debate. The organizations included the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the groups of the Rejection Front: the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Struggle Front, the Palestine Liberation Front and the Arab Liberation Front.

What seems to have elicited the Joint Statement at this particular point are two causes: first, what its signers see as the increasing unilaterality of a section of the Fateh leadership, whom they say includes Abu Jihad, Abu Mazen, Khalid Hassan and Yasser Arafat, and characterize as "right-wing," in making decisions on behalf of the PLO, and secondly, what the statement's signers perceive to be threats to abandon the tradition of "democratic dialogue" within the PLO in favor of armed repression as a means to settling political disputes. In an interview with *An Nahar al Arabi was ad Duwali* George Habash of the PFLP commented, "It is quite natural that there should be differences of views regarding the concept of national unity. But this in itself is not the serious problem we should try to avoid. What we are afraid of is the deviation from democratic dialogue in settling differences of views in order to reach what is usually known as a common political and organizational program on which the various revolutionary factions would agree. It is therefore important that no leadership should in any way think of imposing its views and hegemony on the other factions."

The Joint Statement indicated not only the concern of its signers about possible repression of their organizations, but also their own growing closeness. There had been considerable political distance between those groups in the past (though, of course, they remained within the framework of the PLO). The Democratic Front had been the primary advocate of the "transitional program" for the PLO, adopted as embodied in the ten point program in 1974. This program, which called for struggle to establish an independent state in any Palestinian territory liberated from Israel, while retaining the long-term goal of a democratic secular state in all of historic Palestine, did not meet the agreement of the Popular Front and a few smaller groups, which joined together in the Rejection Front. One of the main tenets of the Rejection Front has been that the balance of forces within the Middle East render a progressive political settlement impossible at this time. Recently—especially since the Sadat initiative—the DFLP has also adopted this view. On the other hand, the PFLP appears to have accepted the concept of "stages" of struggle, first an independent state in part of Palestine, then a democratic secular state in the entire homeland. Both points—rejection of negotiations at this time, and acceptance of struggle for an independent Palestinian state—were included in the Tripoli Declaration signed last December by all the Palestinian armed organizations, including Fateh.

The basic proposal of the Joint Statement is replacement of the present political decision-making process in the PLO with a committee composed of the secretaries general of all the Palestinian organizations and representation from the central committee of Fateh (which does not have the office of secretary general). The present arrangements, the Statement declared critically, have led

(continued on page 14)

PLO (continued from page 13)

to a situation in which "We feel that the Palestinian decision is taken individually rather than jointly and there is no participation in the political decisions." "Your leadership," the Statement told the Fateh Central Committee, "is still dominant in political decisions. This tendency, however, is at variance with that agreed upon in the National Charter and at odds with principles of work within a united front."

It is difficult to assess what effect the demands of the Joint Statement signatories in regard to the form of unity and process of decision-making will have on the PLO. On the one hand, there was a rather angry reaction from some quarters, as expressed in a circular for Fateh cadre from that organization's Political Security Department. Denouncing the Joint Statement signers as "unpatriotic leftist," the circular rejected their proposal for a change in the decision-making process because "it means abolition of the PLO Executive Committee and this, consequently means abolishing Fateh's leadership and abandoning the Palestinian resistance to the rejectionist." The response went on to charge: "They are afraid of our plan, from which we have not backed-down, which seeks fully to unite the Palestinian military forces and not just have them unified in a front. With the rifle there can be no front."

On another level, however, the response has been more positive. According to reports, at a meeting between representatives of the Fateh Central Committee and signers of the Joint Statement shortly after its issuance, Abu Eyad endorsed the concept of "collective leadership." (Abu Eyad and Abu Saleh are identified as the most powerful leaders of the left in Fateh.) And officialy, the PLO's interim policy-making body, the Central Council, issued a statement in mid-July which approved certain of the elements in the Joint Statement. In part, the PLO's Central Council declared that it "stresses the need to adhere to a democratic dialogue in tacking all internal issues among the resistance groups; to end the mobilization of internal forces against each other; and to do away with instigations, particularly external instigations, aimed at affecting the Palestinian arena."The PLO Central Council announced that it had arranged for a meeting of the PLO's Executive Committee, the Secretaries General of the various groups and others to formulate a plan for national unity to be presented later to the Central Council.

PEACE INITIATIVE OF U.S. AND ARAB RIGHT

The linchpin of the political content of the Joint Statement (as distinguished from the organizational matter of democratic dialogue and the functioning of the national front) is unequivocal opposition to pursuit of a political settlement of the Palestine question at this time. The Joint Statement declares, "Events have proved that there is no opportunity to secure any national goal due to the fact that the balance of forces is in favor of the enemy . . . Continuity of confrontation with the enemy camp will afford us the chance to change the balance of forces to our advantage; we will be able, then, to realize the objectives of our people in the establishment of a people's authority on any liberated Palestinian national territory."

The statement warns that the real object of the "U.S. settlement proposals that are fake in nature" is the "crippling of the Arab liberation movement and the Palestinian revolution." There is a strong relationship, in the perspective of the Joint Statement, between hopes of a U.S. settlement and close relations with reactionary regimes. The statement avers that "Some elements in the PLO and its leadership still maintain relationships with the Egyptian regime and continue to consolidate their links with regimes such as Saudi Arabia and Morroco. This is being done on the false premise that it is possible to be part of the promised settlement, in addition to securing a seat on the American train."

Indirect contacts with the U.S. and efforts to establish direct contacts through the good offices of conservative regimes, the Joint Statement asserts, "encourages imperialism to continue its efforts to split the resistance and pull some sectors of it toward a capitulationist settlement."

The response from some in Fateh has been that their openness to establishing contact with the U.S. government through the Arab regimes is an example of clever tactical manuevering. The Fateh circular to its cadres declared "Any U.S. rapproachment toward the liberation organization means shattering U.S.-Israeli relations. This is why many Arab countries are offering to talk on our behalf to demand U.S. recognition of the liberation organization. While agreeing [to these talks], we know in advance that the outcome will be the failure of these regimes in their mission. Consequently, these regimes will stop asking is to tone down our relations with socialist countries. The Fatah political genius is what makes us able to establish relations with Moscow, Riyadh and Peking according solely to the interest of the [Palestine] cause." While the perspective of the Joint Statement signers tends to divide forces into progressive and reactionary, the opposing point of view tends to see elements as pro-Palestinian or anti-Palestinian or, as the Fateh circular states, "Tell me what your position toward the Palestinian cause is and I will tell the people whether you are ultimately a progressive or a reactionary."

ALLIANCE WITH LEBANESE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

A major concern of the Joint Statement is the nature of the PLO's alliances in Lebanon. The Joint Statement remarks critically that "Past practices of the Palestinian leadership have damaged the alliance [with the Lebanese National Movement] by retaining the power of decision when dealing with the Lebanese masses.

"We believe that the freedom of decisions taken when dealing with the Lebanese masses is the right of the Lebanese National Movement—this is the correct form of alliance. Moreover, we should render our assistance and put all our capabilities at the disposal of the Lebanese National Movement so that it can be the political and military leadership in the struggle to liberate Lebanon, and in order to serve the common struggle where the enemy [Israel] occupies its southern part, and because of the national and democratic objectives of the Lebanese National Movement."

Two incidents during the spring developed the polarization in the PLO concerning its relation to the Lebanese National Movement. First, key elements in the leadership of Fateh gave their quiet approval to a so-called Committee of 13's compromise worked out among traditional Lebanese parliamentarians; this pact, while it ambiguously reaffirmed the Cairo Agreement (which legitimizes the PLO armed presence under certain restrictions in southern Lebanon), also excluded the Lebanese left from any role in the government. To the signers of the Joint Statement, this was a dangerous development, contradicting the principles which ought to govern relationships with the Lebanese progressive movement and entrenching in power conservative politicians inimical to the Palestinian struggle and that of the progressive Lebanese. To the Fateh leaders it was a pragmatic tactical move that obviated the peril of a developing alliance against the Palestinians and solidified the Cairo Agreement.

The second issue involved the relation to the UNIFIL command in southern Lebanon. The dominant elements in the leadership of Fateh were accused by the left of making decisions unilaterally about guerrilla activities and deployment in southern Lebanon and concluding agreements with UNIFIL—without allowing participation by the Lebanese National Movement or even of all the armed Palestinian organizations. On the other hand, there were those within Fateh's leadership who justified their unilaterality by citing the relatively greater strength of Fateh's armed force.

Beyond the objections to the process of decision making, there was some disagreement as to the substance of the decisions. The Fateh leadership was anxious to avoid confrontation with UNIFIL, to the point of forbidding fedayeen infiltration behind the UNIFIL lines and taking other action to restrict military activity in the South. On the other hand, several Palestinian organizations took a less accomodating posture. The Joint Statement, describing its understanding of the UNIFIL presence as being solely to supervise Israeli withdrawal, warns, "If this force intercepts our fighters or threatens bases in southern Lebanon we

(continued on page 15)

Briefs

IS ISRAEL PLANNING TO OCCUPY EAST JORDAN? The Israeli army is reported to have established a school for training army officers to run the Jordanian government. The school is said to be code named "Magor," and located in the main army base at Showeifat, in the vicinity of Jerusalem. The school is reported to have been opened shortly after Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin assumed office in 1977.

Israeli generals have previously discussed publicly the seizure of the northern half of the East Bank of Jordan, a zone running from Amman north to the Syrian border, as a possible "war aim" in the future. The concept involves the forcible establishment of a "Palestinian homeland" in that region, in which Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza, possibly even from "pre-67" Israel, would be resettled under coercion. They could still be bussed to work in Israeli enterprises but would not constitute a "demographic danger" to the ethnic exclusivity of Israel.

THE FIRST KNOWN FEDAYEEN RAID ACROSS THE JORDAN RIVER IN ALMOST TEN MONTHS was launched on the night of June 11-12. Al Fateh raiders were reported to have scaled the fence around the Zionist settlement of Mehola, four kilometers west of the river and attacked it with assault rifles and grenades. WAFA, the Palestinian news agency, said that the operation was named Abu Ali Eyad, in honor of the Fateh commando leader killed by Jordanian troops during the liquidation of the Palestinian armed presence in northern Jordan in 1971.

Since the raid in June reports have stated that the Palestinian resistance plans to step up its attacks across the Jordan in coming months.

GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN AIMED AT TARGETS SUPPORTING EXPLOITATION OF PALESTINIAN LABOR IN ISRAEL. WAFA reported that guerrillas attacked the labor exchange in Nablus, in the occupied West Bank, with incendiary devices on June 11. The labor exchange offices throughout the areas occupied in 1967 are operated by the Israeli Ministry of Labor to provide Palestinian workers for low-paid menial work in the construction and agricultural sectors within the pre-67 Israeli borders.

Earlier, on June 6, three armed commandos stopped a bus along the Ramallah-Lod road. The bus was bound to pick up Palestinian workers for jobs in Israel. The fedayeen ordered the Arab driver to leave the bus and they then set it afire.

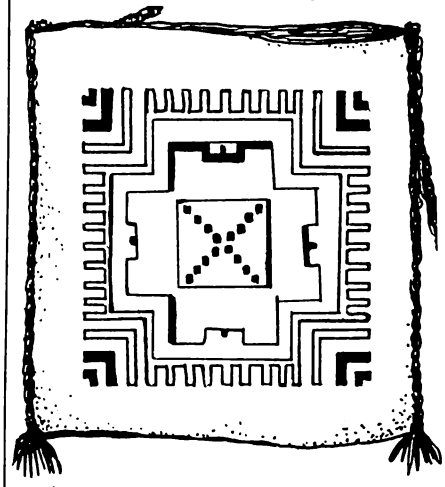
THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT HAS GIVEN ISRAEL PERMISSION TO SELL KFIR FIGHTERS TO TAIWAN. The planes, manufactured by Israel's aircraft industry, are powered by General Electric engines, made in the U.S., and therefore require U.S. government approval before export to a third country. Last year the U.S. refused Israel permission to export the same type of aircraft to Ecuador.

ISRAEL PLANS TO DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF ZIONIST SETTLERS IN THE WEST BANK THIS YEAR. Israeli Minister of Agriculture Ariel Sharon announced in June that the government planned to expand the number of Israeli families in the West Bank from 1000 to 2000 this year.

Sharon also declared that Zionist settlers will be concentrated in a wedge to separate the Palestinians living inside the pre-67 border from those residing in the West Bank. Sharon said that he feared that if peace were established, Palestinian refugees might settle in the area and create a population link between the Arab villages west of the border and those situated along the mountainous ridge of the West Bank.

THE ISRAELI SUPREME COURT RULED THAT SALE OF APARTMENTS IN JERUSALEM'S JEWISH QUARTER COULD BE RESTRICTED TO JEWS. Claiming that such discrimination was "legitimate and justified," the court ruled against Muhammad Said Borkan, a Palestinian who had sued the Israeli Housing Ministry and the Company for Reconstruction of the Jewish Quarter. Borkan had been denied the right to purchase a flat; ironically the flat was located in a house which Borkan had owned and lived in until its expropriation by the Israeli government.

Palestinian Embroidery Available



Attractive blouses and handbags produced by a Palestinian women's cooperative are now available from the Palestine Solidarity Committee. The "Women of Tal az Za'atar" workshop has decorated its products with the cross-stitched motifs which have ornamented the dresses of Palestinian women for many generations.

The workshop was established by the Palestine Aid Society not only to encourage the preservation of embroidery as a popular art form, but even more importantly, to provide work opportunities for women who survived the siege of the Tal az Za'atar refugee camp on the periphery of Beirut, which was overrun by right-wing Lebanese militias during the civil war.

To order the handicrafts, use the order blank enclosed.

Palestinian University (cont. from page 3)

For example, one day they decide to go into a Jalazone refugee camp near Bir Zeit and to clean up the schools, painting them, improving playgrounds. Sometimes the students plant trees, build sidewalks. They help farmers at harvest. The West Bank is primarily an olive producing area and the students help farmers pick their olives.Sometimes the students sweep streets, clean up a town.

The community work program is designed to acquaint the students with their country; they go to various areas to do their work, they might camp overnight, stay over a weekend. They get to know people in other communities, farmers, the village people where they work, and also they do a great deal of useful work. The program also breaks down notions about isolating women. In our society, or at least in parts of it, the outlook towards women is still the traditional one, especially in rural areas. These people see boys and girls travelling together, working together, playing, joking together, and they eventually begin to realize there is nothing wrong with this, that in fact it can be a constructive sort of relationship.

The program has many objectives, but a central one is to show people that it's not a shame to get one's hands dirty doing manual labor, even if you are educated, because unfortunately this misconception is one of the many shortcomings of our culture and traditions. You know in the Third World in general people tend to have this bias against manual labor. Breaking this down is one of the program's primary objectives. I think the community work program is one of the best things at Bir Zeit; the students themselves are enthusiastic about it. □

PLO (continued from page 14)

will deal with it as a hostile force."

Major strategic and organizational decisions will face the Palestine National Council, the Palestinian "parliament in exile," when it next meets, perhaps as early as this fall. Certainly questions concerning the broader Arab context will influence the conditions in which those decisions must be made, questions including the extent to which the failure of Sadat's initiative has been seen and accepted, and the fate of plans (particularly Saudi plans) for an Arab summit to establish a new basis of unity between reactionary and progressive states in the wake of Sadat's failure. Other questions are basically Palestinian issues, and foremost among these is that of democratic dialogue as opposed to armed force as a means of resolving political diffences. □

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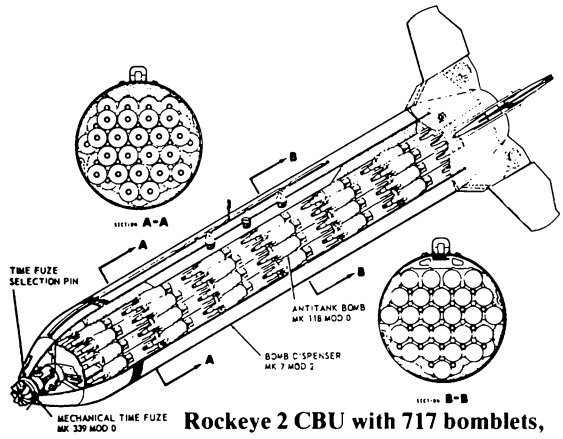

Rockeye 2 CBU with 717 bomblets, an improved version of the Israeli bomblets

Cluster Bomb Controversy

The bombardment of southern Lebanon during the Israeli invasion last March with cluster bombs supplied by the United States gave fresh evidence of the extent to which the U.S. government is implicated in Israeli aggression in the Middle East. Israel's use of cluster bombs also provided a new impetus to the campaign in the U.S. against this government's equipping the Israeli army with sophisticated atrocious weapons for use against the Palestinians and other Arab people.

The cluster bomb which Israel used in the invasion of Lebanon is said to be the Rockeye 500 pound anti-tank fragmentation bomb. Each bomb contains 247 fragmentation bomblets. The Rockeye is a sophisticated version of older fragmentation bombs, now designed not only to kill human beings, but also to penetrate armoured vehicles.

A recently published guide to U.S. weapons for export, *Arsenal of Democracy* by Tom Gervasi, makes the following comments about the Rockeye's improved efficacy: "Needless to say, the increased velocity of fragments together with advanced techniques for multiplying the number of lethal fragments, ensuring their even dispersion over a wide area, and ensuring detonation at the optimum altitudes for maximum effect, have given modern anti-personnel fragmentation bombs a capability for efficient, controlled devastation not even anticipated twenty years ago. Fragments moving at speeds sufficient to penetrate the armour of a tank are clearly not impeded by steel helmets. A larger number of fragments spread over a larger area will be more lethal to far many more people."

During the invasion of Lebanon Israel used the cluster bombs, which had been given by the U.S., not against tank columns but against essentially civilian targets, including the suburbs and refugee camps around Tyre, particularly the Rashidiya camp. The use of the bombs violated a secret agreement previously made with the U.S., the existence of which was revealed by Congressman Paul McCloskey. The agreement apparently included clauses restricting use of the weapon to military targets and occasions of full-scale war between Israel and more than one Arab state. After unfavorable publicity about the use of the cluster bomb in March, Israel and the U.S. exchanged notes in April renewing the pledge.

On May 12, the governing board of the National Council of Churches condemned Israel's use of the bombs, which it stated "had wantonly killed, mutilated and maimed" masses of civilians. The governing board declared that the U.S. government, which supplied the weapons, shares "the moral responsibility" for the death of innocent people. The statement of the NCC, and other protests about the use of CBU's in Lebanon, recalled the world-wide condemnation of the U.S. government's use of fragmentation bombs in Vietnam.

The cluster bombs continue to create a danger in southern Lebanon, because many of the bomblets lie unexploded in fields and inhabited areas. Lebanese civilians are reported to have been hit by exploding bomblets when they stepped on them accidentally, and on May 5, a Senegalese soldier with UNIFIL was killed when he trod on a bomblet in Qana, southern Lebanon. His companion was wounded. □

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